

**KDKD Radio**

May 22, 2008

Section: News

**National EMS Week**

Gov. Matt Blunt and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) today recognized Missouri's dedicated emergency medical services personnel as part of National Emergency Medical Services Week, May 18-24. Gov. Matt Blunt issued a proclamation designating EMS Week, which is being celebrated throughout Missouri to honor these Missourians who serve their communities with day-to-day lifesaving services.

Our emergency medical personnel are an essential part of every Missouri community, small and large, Gov. Blunt said. These emergency responders provide vital 24-hour lifesaving care to those in need, and we honor their heroic work and dedication to the citizens of Missouri.

Missouri is served by 18,000 EMTs and Paramedics across the state, many of whom are volunteers. The state is also supported by 215 ground ambulance and 15 air ambulance services. From rural farmlands to inner cities, EMS personnel serve those in need. Often the first to respond to an emergency, the EMS community is called upon not just to transport a patient but provide rapid lifesaving medical care and patient support.

Whether its responding to the recent devastating storms in Southwest Missouri, a motor vehicle accident, fire or other emergency, EMS professionals are the first to lend a hand, DHSS Director Jane Drummond said. A 911 call comes in and they hit the road to care for strangers in need, regardless of the situation. This is why DHSS has made EMS services and personnel a priority.

Gov. Blunt and Director Drummond noted the legislature passed legislation sponsored by Dr. Robert Wayne Cooper creating a Time Critical Diagnosis (TCD) System, which will improve how stroke and ST-elevation myocardial infarction (STEMI), a particularly fatal type of heart attack, sufferers are assessed, transported and treated on a statewide basis. The legislation came out of a recommendation by the departments Time Critical Diagnosis Task Force.

During National EMS Week, it is important to recognize the EMS community's dedication to continual improvement of the state's emergency medical care, said Paula Kempf, director of DHSS's EMS Unit. In 2008, they have gone beyond their duty and invested time on the TCD Task Force to integrate Missouri emergency medicine between in- and out-of-hospital providers to improve stroke and STEMI patients care.

Missouri is the first state in the nation to legislatively create both a STEMI and stroke

statewide system of care to make sure people get to the right hospital as fast as possible. Research shows patients transported to designated stroke centers and STEMI centers that can provide definitive care, which may not be the nearest hospital, have higher survival rates. The state has undertaken one of the most comprehensive reviews of its emergency system to address both stroke and STEMI in addition to trauma care already in place. For the Task Force, more than 100 of the state's leading emergency care specialists from a variety of backgrounds and regions reviewed current care components for three months and drafted recommendations based on extensive research and collaboration. DHSS is currently compiling the Task Force's formal recommendations, which will be finalized later this year.

Director Drummond noted the effort to create the Task Force was led by the states EMS Medical Director at the Department of Health and Senior Services, Dr. Bill Jermyn. Sadly, Dr. Jermyn passed away May 15 before Fridays passage of the legislation creating the STEMI and stroke system of care.

Dr. Jermyn had a vision for making Missouri a leader in providing a seamless system for emergency medical services, from the first call for help through rehabilitation, Director Drummond said. His knowledge, dedication, and passion for improving the health and safety of Missourians was unsurpassed.